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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

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15 February 1968

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## *CONTENTS*

25X1

[redacted]  
Laos: Communists step up pressure on key town  
in south. (Page 3)

Dominican Republic: Balaguer has apparently  
overcome student disturbances at university.  
(Page 4)

Guatemala: Communists are reported to be planning  
new terrorist acts in the capital. (Page 5)

25X

25X1

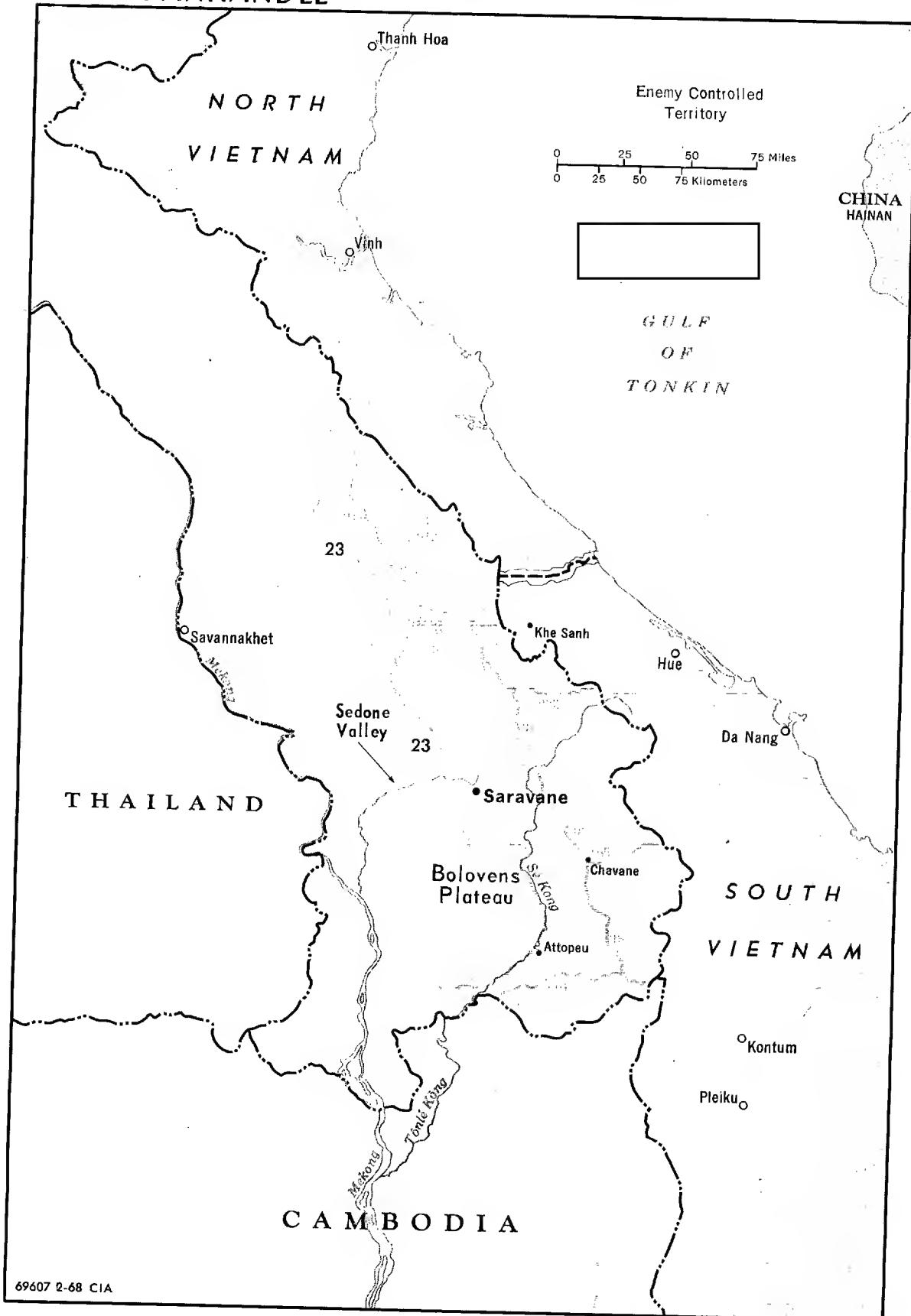
25X1

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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LAOS PANHANDLE



Laos: The Communists are intensifying pressure against government positions in the Saravane area.

Government troops were driven from two positions west of the town on 14 February. According to one unconfirmed report, Saravane itself has come under attack. There are now more than two government battalions committed to Saravane's defense. Their morale is low, however, and it is unlikely they can successfully resist a concerted thrust.

The Communists have refrained through the years from attacking Saravane despite its extremely exposed position. The current pressure, however, may be part of a wider effort to counter stepped-up government interdiction efforts by securing the western approaches to the infiltration corridor.

The Communists may also want to open Route 23 as an alternate north-south route in the southern panhandle. The town could also serve as an anchor for re-establishing the enemy's position in the Sedone valley, a rich rice-producing area which came under full Lao government control only last year.

The loss of Saravane would deal another severe psychological blow to an already uneasy leadership in Vientiane. It would also signal that the objective of the Communists current dry season offensive goes beyond just regaining control over areas they once held.

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\*Dominican Republic: A show of military force has apparently enabled President Balaguer to overcome student disturbances at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD) without serious violence.

Shooting broke out at the UASD between students and police early on 14 February. The incident occurred in the wake of more than a month of student agitation over the university budget.

Balaguer--who has previously indicated he would act firmly against student disorders--ringed the university with an estimated 1,000 troops backed by armored units. Faced with this show of force, students are reported to have agreed to leave the campus. The security forces intend to search the UASD thoroughly for arms.

The security forces appear to have acted effectively and with relative restraint. Nevertheless, a number of "agitators," including some leaders of the left-of-center Dominican Revolutionary Party, were arrested in the interior of the country.

Balaguer seems likely to move in the wake of the disorders to acquire at least a degree of control over the UASD. He is reported to have ordered that laws be drafted giving him a voice in university expenditures and abolishing UASD autonomy. Implementation of such measures would be likely to cause further serious friction between the students--who are supported by Communists and non-Communist leftists--and the government.

25X1

15 Feb 68

4

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Guatemala: Communist terrorism will probably increase in the near future.

25X1

Guatemalan security forces are still searching for those responsible for last month's terrorist outburst. The state of alert decreed on 16 January has been extended for another 30 days.

25X1

25X6

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